



Arlington Council on Aging

Agenda

Date: Thursday October 15, 2020 Time: 6:00 pm

Location: Due to COVID-19 Pandemic, this meeting will be conducted virtually via Zoom, following the rules set forth by the Governor's Executive Order on Remote Participation. These meetings are open to the public and all are welcome. Please call 781-316-3401 or e-mail KShah@town.arlington.ma.us for the link to join the virtual meeting which can be accessed by computer with internet access or by telephone for audio access only.

Kristine Shah, Executive Director

Michael Quinn, Chair

Marge Vanderhill, Secretary

Claire Foley, ASA Liaison

The Council's primary responsibilities are to design, promote, and implement programs and services to address the needs of the community's elder population, and to coordinate existing services in the community.

1. Call to order
2. Citizen's Open Forum
3. Minutes of the September, 2020 meeting for approval
4. Executive Director's Report
5. Report of the Chair
6. Minuteman Senior Services Report: Marge Vanderhill
7. ASA Liaison Report: Claire Foley
8. Old Business
 - a. Open Board Member Position(s)
 - i. Vote on Associate Member
 - b. Age Friendly Next Steps
9. New Business
10. Adjourn - **Next meeting: November 19, 2020**

Executive Director's Report

Kristine Shah

I. Updates on Programs/Services

a. Nutrition and Food Access

- i. Arlington EATS, Council on Aging, and Food Link continue to work together during the pandemic to get Arlington residents access to food safely. Numbers of home deliveries continue to be 220-250 weekly. At least 70% of these deliveries are to older adults. EATS is taking over as the lead for the phone hotline and COA staff will continue to ensure our residents are included.
- ii. The Lahey/BICMC Farm Share program will conclude the last week of October. Work-off volunteers deliver local, organic farm shares to 50 older adults in Arlington each Wednesday thanks to this program
- iii. COA is looking forward to continuing the tradition of delivering approx. 100 turkey dinners to isolated adults on Thanksgiving morning. Volunteers are being recruited and for the first time, meals will be made through a partnership with NEATS/Something Savory/Food Link. Cards are being made by elementary school students. All meals will be delivered in a socially distant, contact-less manor and then followed up with a phone call.
- iv. The COA recertified as an official SNAP application location. We look forward to continuing to assist residents of all ages with this enrolment process, especially during these difficult times.

b. Staying Connected and Supporting Older Residents

- i. Fitness Classes: We have added back Muscle Strengthening (taught by Baystate Physical Therapy) in to our fitness class offerings.
- ii. Other virtual programming continues to grow and expand. In total we are virtually connecting with over 100 individuals per week through all of our programs.
- iii. Fuel Assistance renewals are under way and new application enrollment begins Nov 1. We have found a way to assist applicants in a socially distant manor.
- iv. Medicare Open Enrollment season is under way and SHINE volunteers have been busy assisting residents virtually.

c. Transportation

- i. Medical ride requests are frequent and necessary. Between our COA van and the local taxi company, we are able to cover requests that come in. Thanks to two large donations that we received for transportation, we are able to cover the added cost of transporting older adults in taxis and chair cars when necessary. We are also starting to see an uptick in older adults using the van again for errands and shopping around town. The COA van is still sticking to the policy of having only one rider on the van at a time.
- ii. The volunteer medical escort program is still on hold due to the pandemic. Fulfilling requests for medical rides that require a driver to sign off on a patient's release are the only transportation challenge we are facing frequently.
- iii. The COA is offering free van rides for flu vaccines and also to ballot drop boxes and the polls on Election Day.

d. Grant Updates

- i. Chromebooks are being distributed to older adults who have expressed interest in the technology loan library program, thanks to a \$15,000 CDBG-CV19 grant. If you know of anyone who would like to be a volunteer “Chromebook Teacher” for this program, please let me know.
- ii. We have applied for an additional \$5,000 Grant from the Community Compact IT program to grow our Technology Loan Library.
- iii. The Sanborn Foundation approved our request for \$46,000, which allows us to continue funding for cancer related transportation for all Arlington Residents.

e. Property Tax & Rent Relief Programs

- i. Applications have been updated and are available on the COA website for the 2020-21 Volunteer Tax Work off Program (Deadline October 15) and the Elderly and Disabled Tax Relief Fund (Deadline January 31).
- ii. We were able to add back the Harry Barber program for renters thanks to advocacy. This provides the opportunity for older adults to volunteer for 125 hours in exchange for a \$1,500 check toward their rent.
- iii. Rick Fentin and Michael Quinn will host a virtual info session on Property Tax Deferral on November 12 at 6pm.

f. Other

- i. Construction continues on the 1st and 2nd floors of 27 Maple St and COA staff, along with ASA offices, anticipate being off of the ground floor (and working on the 2nd floor) in the coming weeks.
- ii. The Arlington COVID-19 Relief fund has awarded almost \$100,000 to residents in Arlington who have had financial loss due to Covid. I’m proud of the COA’s roll in the review process for this fund.
- iii. Our social work intern, Ashely Cheetham, is joining us for this meeting and is interested in the Age Friendly initiative. We would love to revisit the areas of focus that the board discussed pre-Covid so we can get the Age Friendly Initiative moving again.